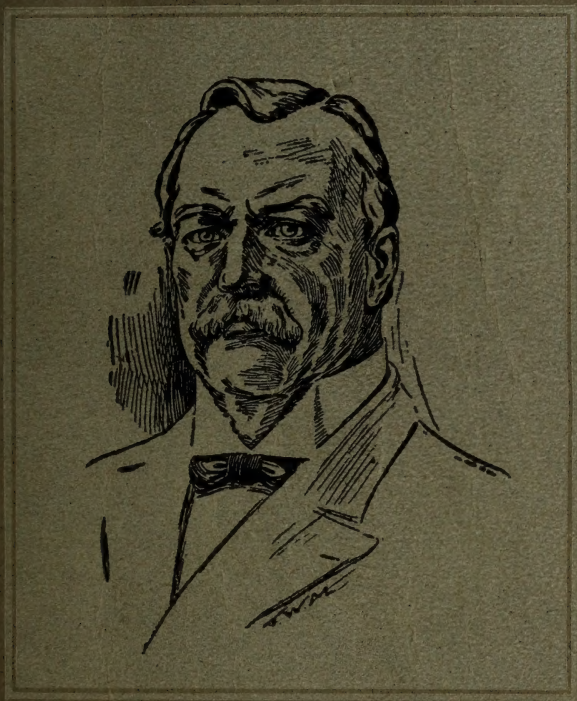


Railroad Secrets



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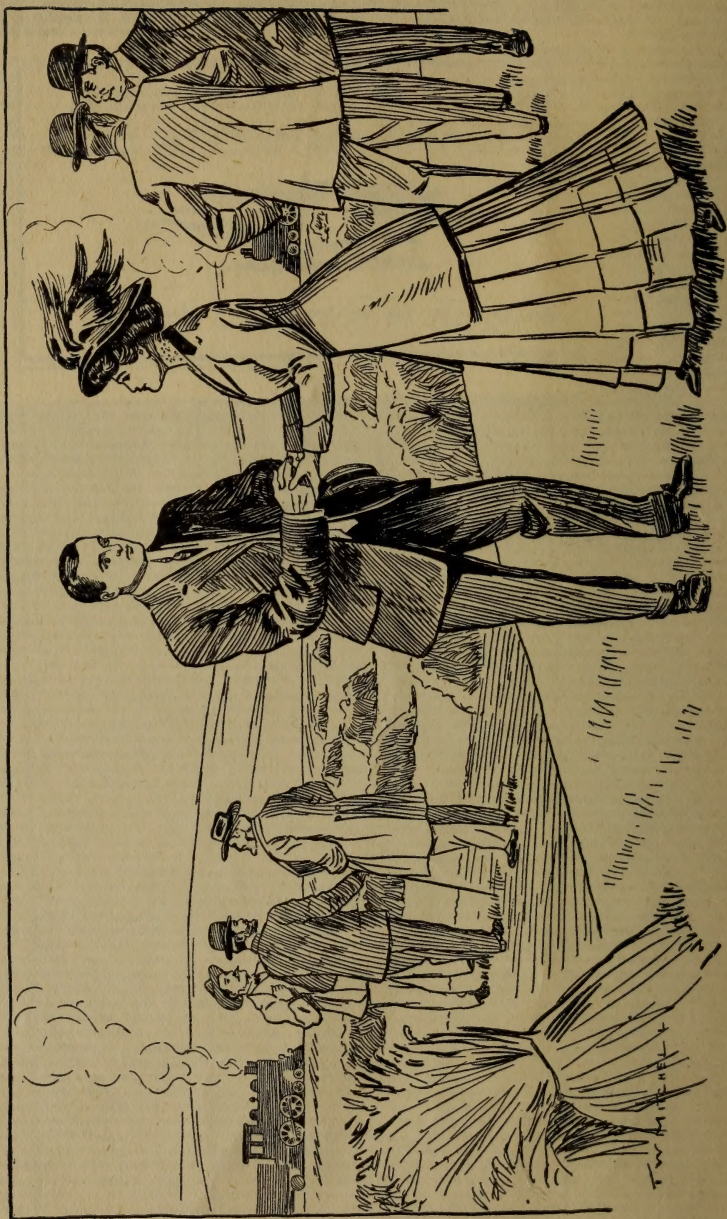
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Railroad Secrets



"Mr. Morris! I do not know what to say, I cannot express my thoughts, but the Price Device is truly wonderful."—Page 48.

Railroad Secrets

A Story of the Relentless Struggle between
the Might of Money and the
Value of Human Lives

By
Alan Hugo

Dedicated to James J. Hill
President The Great Northern Railway

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1908

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Railroad Secrets

Chapter One



WATT, Stephenson and Fulton—the mighty trinity whose prescience has girdled the globe with bands of steel—have been justly called the creators of our new commercial world. Stephenson's "Puffing Billy" was the first clear conception, howe'er crudely expressed, of the powerful locomotives which haul trains at such a terrific speed that they are aptly termed: "The Overland Flyer," "The Cannon Ball Express," etc.

And it would seem that association with these potential, although tamed, monsters, had bred a race of men of iron will and steel sinews—men who coolly carry out their policies and build their roads with the almost inexorable accuracy of natural law, despite myriad difficulties strewn across their path.

The railroad magnates of our day are just as picturesque characters as any in all history. Shaugh-es-y, I-ll, Arriman, Hertz, Van Ho-ne and Graham—the very names are magical because their owners have accomplished seemingly impossible tasks. Strong, confident, bold and sometimes unscrupulous these men may be; but they compel our respect and admiration because they are strugglers first, last and all the time. Whatever their motives may be, and they are generally splendid, these men are working steadfastly and with cool determination to knit states, provinces and nations together. They are bound to ultimately enthrone Commerce as king of our world and posterity will descry virtues in this breed of iron men which we but vaguely discern to-day. And just as Napoleon stands out a warrior of gigantic stature amongst many great warriors,

so will Gordon Graham, the President of the International Railway Limited, eclipse other masters of the science of railroad building in the eyes of the impartial historian of the events of our age.

Graham has profited by the experiences of the Go-lds and the Vanderb-lts, while he has made the daring of I-ll, the calm sagacity of Shaugh-es-y, and the fearless subtlety of Arriman peculiarly his own. The President of the Inter-Ocean Limited is the only true representative of all big railroad men rolled into one. He is as much of an empire builder as James I-ll ever was, as cool and shrewd a speculator in railway stocks and bonds as Arriman, as cautious and sagacious as Shaugh-es-y himself. Thirty-five years ago he acquired possession of a small, insignificant road running out of Milwaukee and poking its nose away up into the Dakotas—ending God knows where, as railroad men phrased it. The road was a white elephant—the rolling stock wretchedly inadequate and not owned by the company—while the road-bed was a positive eye-sore to every skilled enquirer who happened to cross it. No sane man, in the railroad business, excepting Graham, would ever have attempted the task of making this unknown and then useless road a paying concern. But, Graham was no ordinary man. He looked beyond the road that the Go-lds and Vanderb-lts despised. With the penetrating gaze of genius he swept the middle western states—he saw that his road tapped the richest country on earth—he weighed the trend of events—read the future of the great Northwest and beheld the greatest railroad in the world, with a terminus on the Atlantic and Pacific seaboards—a transcontinental trunk line fed by innumerable lesser roads that jutted impudently into the territory monopolized by his great and arrogant rivals. Graham never worried an hour in all his life over the woeful prophecies of his

foes. His only answer to their sneering laughter was hard work. And before the warring factions of the Go-lds and Vanderb-lts recognized the new power in the railroad world, the skeleton of Graham's big trunk line was already established on a dividend-paying basis. The fact dawned slowly on the millionaire families of New York, that if they wished to survive, as railroad magnates, they must combine forces against the rival they despised. All causes of dispute between the Go-lds and Vanderb-lts were sealed up and laid away for future investigation. Graham's marvellous success fully occupied their attention and they resolved to obliterate him as a figure in railroaddom for the sake of the public in general and their private treasuries in particular. Graham would sell out at a nominal figure or they'd squeeze him out. So they argued. But, they didn't know Graham.

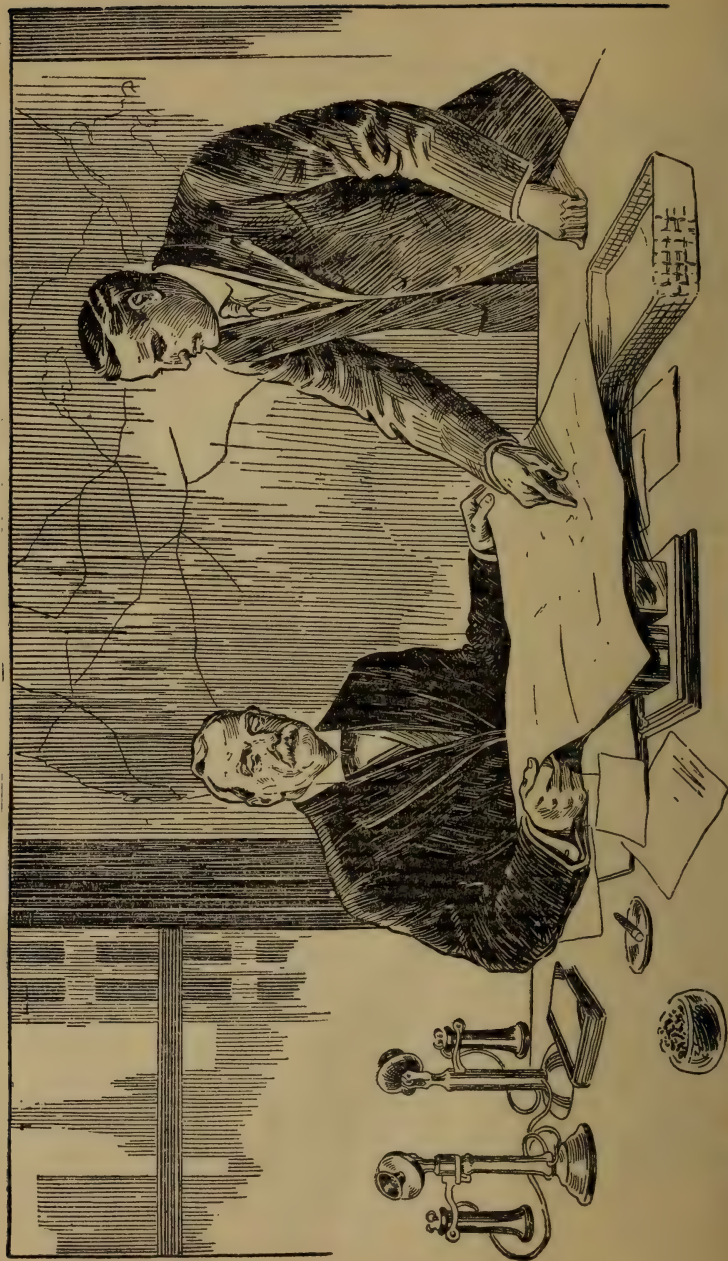
The future President of the International Limited coolly accepted the challenge of the erstwhile foes and kept working on. It was war to the death between brains and enormous capital; but there was one thing that neither the Go-lds nor Vanderb-lts seemed to comprehend. They did not know that all the money force of conservative investors would back the man that had accomplished things, almost akin to miracles. Graham not only read the future of our continent accurately, but he also read the secrets of human nature with unparalleled exactitude. And while his multi-millionaire rivals wasted months in covert overtures he crossed to London—the nursery of sagacious and conservative investors—and returned to New York with practically unlimited credit on English bankers. Colossal as the combined capital of the Go-lds and Vanderb-lts was even then, yet they well knew that they could not carry on the war indefinitely with their dauntless and brainy rival, backed as he was by the greatest financiers

in England. Another strong character was drawn into the conflict by the interests of his banking house in England—no less a personage than J. P. Morg-n, now the ablest of all our financiers. Morg-n's "leaping mind" recognized a kindred spirit in Gordon Graham, not only that but the banker also fully appreciated the immense significance of the rising railroad man's powers. It would be needless and unnecessary to go into details regarding the sternest battle ever fought between rival corporations. Suffice it to say that the Go-lds and Vanderb-lts were forced to relinquish their dreams of monopolizing the transport system of the United States. Morgan gave abundant evidence of his future greatness as a financier, while Gordon Graham emerged from the conflict as the full-fledged President of the great International Limited—the official position he occupies to-day.

But, as we have hinted, our object is not so much to follow Graham through his titanic struggles—the struggles which have built the International—as to reveal the man himself, his wonderful grasp of detail—the brain which boldly conceived and completed the far-famed iron highway, the safest and most luxurious mode of transportation on our planet.

On the afternoon of Oct. 1st, 1908, Graham announced to the newspapers of the world another shrewd move on the part of the management of the International Limited—a move which clinched the hold the road had already on the travelling public. Every man who travelled in the United States travelled via International if at all possible, because the road had already won the people's approval by the extreme carefulness and courtesy of its officials. The death-rate on Graham's road, due to accidents and the like, was insignificant compared to less shrewdly managed lines. The newspapers were always holding up Graham's system

as a sample of how railroads should be conducted, and the President's latest move in contracting with The Price Automatic Signal Company to instal their device all over the International, sent every scribe on the continent delirious in his praise. Twice the amount of the contractor's tender for installing the Price System from coast to coast along the International would not have bought a quarter of the advertising the road received absolutely free of charge. Just why the Graham, the imperturbable—the man with brains packed in ice—laughed silently and heartily on that October afternoon is not hard to guess. But why he installed Price's system—the reasons which led up to his momentous decision, make an interesting story, which begins in our next chapter.



"And, Mr. Graham, permit me to remind you that the responsibility of the wrecks happening hereafter on your road and caused by the ever-present weakness of the human agency will be strictly up to you—if you refuse us a fair and square investigation of our claims.—Page 14.

Chapter Two



TWO months prior to the date mentioned in the preceding chapter, to be exact, on the third of August, 1908, the President of the International Limited sat at his desk staring gloomily at the pile of official documents, letters, et cetera, placed there for his signature. It was plainly evident that the soul of the great man was perturbed, for ever and anon he would arise from his desk and pace restlessly to and fro across his office.

The cares and worries attending positions of grave responsibility—the constant struggle with cool and too often unscrupulous foes rob many of our great men of heart and soul, leaving them mere automata swayed by cold, clear intellects and relentless wills. Gordon Graham's absolute bigness had saved his soul. His road was something more to him than a great and efficient transport system. The International Limited was a paying institution, but it was something vastly more than that. It was in the highest and broadest sense a thorough and efficient servant of the great and ever-restless people of the United States. The management of the road always had an eye to the comfort, convenience and safety of its passengers. Graham's private opinion, although seldom expressed in so many words, was that big men and governments should be built on the paternalistic principle. Their official capacity on earth was to guide humanity into a higher and better civilization.

The President of The International Limited treated the humblest servant of the company as a fellow-em-

ployee and a brother. Every fatal mishap on the road hurt the soul of the man that always smiled—the only place that Graham frowned and cursed fate was in the privacy of his office in the big building on Broadway. Ceaseless struggle had not petrified the President's heart. His fine Celtic nature refused to be o'erwhelmed with the mass of detail which constantly confronted him.

But on this third day of August, Graham was evidently ill at ease. It was toward evening, indeed the busy clerks in the outer offices were finished for the day. Graham's Private Secretary alone remained to answer the commands of the big-hearted chief, as all in his employ fondly called the President of The International. Mr. Mellin, in the next room, patiently awaited the call of his chief and listened to the nervous tread of the big man, which plainly betokened mental perturbation.

"Who would imagine that the death of an unknown engineer out on the fringe of the prairie would cause big Graham to worry? But that's the man all over," murmured the Private Secretary. "What other railroad magnates would lightly term incidents on the day's work, the chief worries over when alone, although in this case he has been more than prompt and generous in conferring a pension, with extras, on the widow."

The Private Secretary's barely uttered thoughts had reference to the news which had reached the Chief that day of a smash on one of the feeders of The International trunk line away out in Wyoming. The wreck, in a day of serious railroad fatalities, was insignificant—eastern newspapers barely noticing the matter at all. But a faithful servant of the company, by an unavoidable accident, had been hurled into eternity, and Graham simply recognized the dead engineer as a man and a brother killed in the discharge

of his duty. So while the President of The International fitfully gazed down on the hurrying throngs of pleasure-seekers on Broadway, his thoughts were focussed on a rude little home, two thousand miles away. He had risen from the ranks, he was a man of the people, and, although his mighty intellect had wrung luxury and wealth out of his age, a man of the people he would remain for all time.

Every few moments Mr. Mellin would noiselessly open the door communicating between his own and the President's office, and glance at his Chief, and as noiselessly retire. About eight o'clock, and as the night was beginning to steal across the city, the loud cries of newspaper boys rose shrilly up from the street below: "Extry, Special Extry, great smash on the Dominion Trunk Railroad! Twenty killed and scores fatally injured! Extry, Special Extry!"

Again and again the shrill cries of the boys pierced the gathering night above the rumble of the city's traffic, and when at last the fearful meaning of their shouts impressed itself on Graham's brain he crossed the room swiftly to his desk and pressed a button. As his Secretary appeared a good-natured smile of recognition eclipsed the gloom that had settled on the President's countenance, and in his quiet, even cheerful, way, he said: "Kindly see that a copy of every evening paper is on my desk in ten minutes. Order my car for 9.15, and—and that will be all for to-night, Mr. Mellin!"

The Private Secretary had no sooner disappeared than the kindly smile vanished to be replaced with the gloom which the death of the old engineer and the latest news had caused.

"My God, Hertz must feel awful about that smash on his road. It is just as well managed and officered as The International. If a wreck like that should occur on my road, I'd feel like a murderer, after having the

representative of The Price System of Automatic Train Stopping and Controlling for Railways explain their proposition so thoroughly to me. No wonder James I-ll says that he is afraid to start on a railway journey in case it should be his last. I'll investigate and test the Price System——"

At this point in Graham's audibly uttered thoughts the Secretary entered silently and placed the evening papers on the desk of his Chief. With a courteous "Good-night, sir!" Mr. Mellin retired, and in a few moments more the President of The International was absorbed in a thrilling account of the disaster.

Few of the millions of newspaper readers scattered all over the continent appreciated the hours of agony that story carried for high railroad officials from the Gulf of Mexico to the cold northland lapped by the icy waters of the Arctic. These men of iron are not as heartless as the average citizen is apt to suppose. Graham read on and on, column after column of the revolting details, for although the reporter on the ground had endeavored to curtail the story of the awful tragedy, the sensational press of New York pandered to the morbid curiosity of the denizens of Manhattan, and they recognized this dark chapter in the history of railroading as peculiarly acceptable to a majority of their readers.

It was exactly 9.30 when the President of The International savagely rolled up the evening papers and flung them into the waste-paper basket. Lighting a cigar, he arose from his chair and resumed his restless pacing to and fro. A lawyer, held unusually late studying the intricacies of a complicated case, in the building across the way, watched Graham as he paced nervously up and down his light-flooded office.

"That Canadian wreck worries Graham, I'll bet a ten spot, just as much as if it had occurred on his

own road. What a man he is, as if fat dividends were not enough for his shareholders! It's a new stunt for a railroad president to bother about human lives; but old Graham is doing that right now or I miss my guess."

The lawyer was right. The immense toll of human lives exacted by the railroads of his own land had caused the President of The International the only hours of gloomy thought he ever knew. No man on the continent realized more thoroughly the greater care and caution exacted by the management of railways in Canada, as compared to the United States, than Gordon Graham. Well he knew that all that human agency could do to avert that wreck on the Canadian road had been done. The same sort of a catastrophe might happen on his own road any day, attended with a far greater loss of life. Traffic was always fairly heavy on the International—as a rule far heavier than on any Canadian road. A similar smash—but Graham refused to contemplate the dreadful consequences. By sheer will-power the magnate banished the vision of mangled humanity conjured up by reading the story of the Canadian catastrophe and made his way to the street below. But as he was whirled home in the powerful Panhard this and that gruesome detail of the wreck would force itself on his brain. What if Price's representative were right? He recalled the square-jawed, manly young fellow. His words returned with appalling and forceful eloquence.

"Mr. Graham," he had said, "I'm not representing any miracle-worker. I'm merely relating the outcome of inventive genius, the results of persistent and tireless investigation. No smash *can* happen on a road equipped with The Price Signal System. The world is waiting for a thorough and extensive application of this device. I've been requested to lay the proofs of a rigid test of our Signal and Control System before you because

you are the representative railroad man of our age. More than that, sir, we are prepared to instal our system on any part of your trunk line or any of its branches at our own expense. Test it for yourself. Prove its efficiency. It is the only device known that will effectually end railroad wrecks for all time. It simply cannot fail. It is as exact in its working as natural law. All we ask you to do is to consider the proofs. Prove it for yourself. And, Mr. Graham, permit me to remind you that the responsibility of all wrecks happening hereafter on your road and caused by the ever-present weakness of the human agency will be strictly up to you—if you refuse us a fair and square investigation of our claims.”

The President of the International Limited remembered the simple and eloquent words—he remembered the earnestness of the manly young fellow as he whirled home in his luxurious car and he well knew that one man at least had implicit faith—the faith born of actual knowledge—in the Price System of Automatic Train Stopping and Controlling for Railways.



No man can marvel at the railroad magnate's preference for a modern yacht as the home of his daughter while on pleasure bent.—Page 19.

Chapter Three



GORDON GRAHAM'S home was one of a row of mansions on River Side Drive overlooking the Hudson, and facing the Jersey shore. On his arrival that evening he found the house strangely still. The furniture in the public rooms on the main floor was draped in white canvas, which loomed ghostly through the gloom as Graham traversed the hall. But he had no sooner switched on the light than obsequious men servants stood before him, as if they had sprung out of the walls. One piloted the great man to the elevator, while the chief butler inquired if the master would care to lunch? The "No, thank you," in kindly tones revealed the reason why good servants never left Graham's employ. After a shower bath and dressing, the President felt refreshed, and settling in his library he reached for the letters which had arrived since morning.

Gordon Graham was one of the most methodical men on earth. He insisted that all purely personal matters should be forwarded to his Club, or his home address. On this night he carefully shuffled the letters, and picking two out of the bunch, pushed the rest aside for later or less personal attention. An observer might have noticed a kindlier light in the deep-set, full grey eyes as Graham sank back in his easy chair to read the favored notes. Whatever the letters contained matters little nor is it our intention to pry into the secrets of the big man's private correspondence. But we may affirm that the message of both was pleasing in the highest degree, and also

guess that the writer was none other than the President's "Little Girl," as Graham fondly called his only daughter, although she was a woman grown, and one of the reigning queens of New York society.

Miss Graham, according to the wishes of her father, spent the hot months of each year on his yacht, "The Foam," as a general rule. Sometimes she would spend weeks cruising along the coasts of Florida; but when old Sol got right down to hard work, "The Foam's" prow would be turned to the north, and the lady skipper would coast the cool shores of Newfoundland and Labrador, often sailing up the great St. Lawrence as far as the ancient and picturesque city of Quebec. Belle Graham, as her friends called her, possessed all the vigor and nervous energy that had made her father famous. She was never content unless she was "doing things," and these things were generally beyond the capabilities of the ordinary woman. Miss Graham, although "The Foam" carried the full complement of officers required to manage a sea-going vessel, was one of the few women in the United States who had, by hard work, acquired skipper's papers. Everybody knew more or less about her nautical skill, and none better than the grey-whiskered captain who was nominally the master of "The Foam." Few ports on the Atlantic seaboard were unvisited by the quick vessel during the yachting season; indeed, it was a matter of common knowledge that when the mistress of the yacht was on board, "The Foam" poked her nose into every strange nook and bay of a coast famous for its numerous indentations.

It may seem strange that the greatest of all railroad men should have so planned his daughter's hours of pleasure that she was rarely a passenger on any railroad train. But the matter is easily explained, and one cannot cavil at a father's peculiar care for

an only child. Mr. Graham well knew that a modern and well-equipped sea-going vessel was a safer means of locomotion than even the best managed railroad on earth. Railroad travelling with a positive assurance of safety demands human infallibility. The semaphore system demands more caution and diligence than the most efficient organizations can always give. Just as long as the human agency is responsible for the correct working of our signal systems, so long will the inevitable catastrophe every now and then attend the operation of railroad traffic. Human intelligence, howe'er trained and skilful, is not omniscient, cautious servants may be careless for a moment, brain and body wearies of the self-same task day after day, and—railway wrecks occur.

The President of the International Limited was far too shrewd a reasoner to suppose for a second of time that even his famous road was immune from disaster. The human element, of course, enters into an estimate of the probabilities of safety on board ship; but it is reduced to a minimum. And that element, or agency, is highly trained and centralized in a few officials always on board the vessel. The safety of a railroad express, on the other hand, depends on hundreds—if not thousands, of operators. No man can marvel at the railroad magnate's preference for a thoroughly modern yacht as the home of his daughter while on pleasure bent.

But pretty Belle Graham resembled her father in temperament. She loved her own way. More than that she insisted on having her own way. And this summer the cool uplands of Colorado appealed to her wayward fancy. She had "done" Europe, pushed the prow of "The Foam" into every picturesque bay on the Atlantic coast, and she longed for the snowy peaks of the Rockies—the Alps of her native land. Mr.

Graham tried very diplomatically to sidetrack her desire; but the girl was as autocratic as any empress ever was, and the man of iron with the big heart placed his private car—the *America*—at the disposal of Belle and her friends. For some time the President of the International Limited thought seriously of accompanying the young people as far as Colorado Springs; but a tremendous mass of business demanded his presence at headquarters. More than that, the gross receipts of his road ran millions behind the previous year, and Graham, the proud and invincible in the business world, contemplated a dissatisfied meeting of directors at no distant date. Two spur lines had been absorbed by the International Limited early in the year, and while the President clearly beheld the profits which were bound to ultimately result from both deals, he well knew that his shareholders would demand dividends. The failure of the great system to pay dividends would mean a decided slump in overland stock, even suppose that failure occurred for the first time in fifteen years. Shareholders, large and small, took no account of the long money stringency; they would not consider its direct results for a moment of time. Dividends they wanted and dividends they would have, or know the reason why. When invested capital ceases to be profitable, even temporarily, otherwise sane and shrewd business men act and talk foolishly. Graham knew all this. He either had to dip into the surplus earnings of the road, and the absorbing of the two feeders early in the season had shrunk these into insignificance, or “water her up,” as his friend Arriman would have undoubtedly done in his position. But Graham hated the very term “watered stock.” He was essentially a big-hearted, whole-souled, square man of affairs, and his shareholders would have to wait on results—that was all.

Nevertheless, the necessity of declaring a "no dividend term" for the greatest railroad system in the world hurt the innate pride of the big man; but there was no other alternative that he would consider for a moment. And like all extraordinary men, Graham had created enemies. Two of the bitterest of these occupied directors' chairs in the conferences of the International Limited. They were waiting their opportunity—biding their time; but the storm was as inevitable as the next directors' meeting.

The chief of the International knew all this. Paternal affection called him to the cool slope of the Rockies. Business affairs of vast importance demanded his daily presence in New York, and Mr. Graham stayed in the city.

Belle, his "Little Girl," had been six weeks in Colorado. The trip had proved invigorating, and the cool clear air of the elevated region had filled her whole being with greater energy than ever before. But she wearied for the company of her father—the man who had been mother, brother, all-in-all to her ever since the dreamy days of childhood. And she had written in her gay and imperious way:

"You dear old Dad! I just know that you wouldn't stay in little old New York unless important affairs demanded your attention. If the father cannot come to the daughter, the daughter will arise and go to the father. Seriously, Colorado is delightful. I have profited much by my sojourn. But, Dad, I want to be near you, and I—am—coming—home. Counter orders will not be obeyed. Expect definite news of my departure for the East in a few days."

Graham's other correspondence remained unopened. He read his daughter's letter again and again to leave it down on his writing table, where the imperious sentences would catch his eye at a glance. Through the

smoke of his cigar the President of the International conjured up the queenly figure of his daughter in all the glorious bloom of her twenty-three years. The picture of his "Little Girl" dominated his thoughts for a few moments, and gradually just such another girl occupied the sheet of mind. Such another girl, but more airy and graceful—a more delicate beauty altogether. Graham, for the moment, was once more the newly risen power in the railroad world. The Go-lds and Vanderb-lts had been forced to recognize the irresistible magic of his genius, and this delicate beauty of dreamland had rewarded his prowess with her hand and heart. How long the Chief of the International allowed the wife of his youth to occupy his thoughts who shall say. It may have been twenty minutes, it may have been an hour later, when he arose from his chair and murmured: "Sweetheart, our daughter will be with me soon, very soon."

Graham crossed over to the window and allowed the dark green blind to run high. A low red moon swung just above the trees over the Jersey shore; the Hudson poured its seemingly blood-stained floods onward to the sea, and silence sweet and restful had enveloped the tumultuous city, save for the occasional clang of wheels on the elevated structure. It was 1.30 when President Graham retired.



The conductor, an old and faithful servant of Gordon Graham's, caught up the young woman as if she had been a child, and, despite her imperious commands, carried her to where the America was twisted across the tracks and gently forced her into the car.—Page 30.

Chapter Four



THE sleep of a million humble toilers on the Island of Manhattan was less disturbed that night than the sleep of the great man who had preserved his soul amidst the never-ending skirmishes for places and power. We are prone to imagine that the lives of the great and wealthy are ceaseless rounds of pleasure. We note the glitter of rank and fail to estimate its attendant cares.

Every man in New York City, and a majority of the intelligent citizens of both the United States and Canada, knew much about Gordon Graham, the railroad magnate and multi-millionaire. He had, by the force of matchless genius and untiring work, attained pre-eminence even in the inner circle of notable men. But we may safely assert that thousands of humble officials on The International Overland Limited slept sounder and got more solid joy out of existence than the founder and President of the road. This sultry summer night the Chief of the Overland tossed restlessly on his pillow. The iron frame and steel sinews of the strong man were wearied and ached for the solace of sleep; but the active brain could not be stilled. Ever and again he would doze off to awaken with a start; pleasant dreams, embodying and portraying his beautiful and imperious daughter, alternated with uncanny pictures of railroad disasters, many of which Graham had witnessed when he occupied a humbler position in the world of railroad affairs. Towards morning the Chief of the International awoke with a start. The dawn was beginning to creep softly into his chamber

through the half-drawn curtains. Just as the big man donned his bath robe the telephone tinkled, almost hesitatingly, as if the operator were "anxious not to startle the Chief out of a profound and much-needed slumber. As Graham placed the receiver to his ear the nervous voice of Mr. Mellin came over the wire: "Is this Mr. Graham? Sorry to disturb you, sir. Number Seven has been wrecked at Belleville, Nebraska. Yes, bad smash. Twenty-eight killed and many seriously injured."

Although the ominous news staggered Graham and paled his swarthy cheeks, his voice rang sharp, clear and decisive into the instrument: "When did number seven leave Denver?"

"At six-thirty, last evening, sir."

"Do you know if The America—Miss Graham's car—was picked up at Denver by number seven?"

The Secretary distinctly noted the quaver in the Chief's voice, and although he worded his reply with the diplomacy of the trained servant, his words were brief and brutal enough in all conscience.

"Miss Graham and her friends are quite safe, although severely shaken up and suffering from slight injuries. Don't worry on that head. She is in the hands of friends."

The strong man shook for a moment like an aspen leaf; but recovering himself by an effort of his powerful will he ordered:

"Have the road cleared for a special to Chicago. Send my car up to the house. We leave the Grand Central in one hour. You understand!"

"Yes, sir!"

Graham hung up the receiver and staggered back into a chair. He dropped his head into his hands and moaned in despair.

"My God! My God! I suppose the only thing that saved Belle was the strong, steel-constructed car. Laws

should be promulgated and enforced by every civilized government prohibiting the running of wooden coffins on our railroads. That would save some lives until some such system as The Price Automatic Control is adopted by all railroads. Perhaps that young man was right. Good heavens! To think I did not order the testing of the apparatus at once."

For a few moments the President of the International Limited was convulsed with grief; but only for a few moments. Graham was a man of action—Napoleonic in his methods. He rang up the Vanderbilt Hotel and asked to be connected with the representative of The Price Automatic Signal System at once.

"Can't disturb your guests at this hour? Hello, there! This is President Graham of The International. Connect me with Mr. A. Morris at once—at once, do you hear?"

A few seconds elapsed, when a sleepy voice rasped, "Hello!"

"This is Graham of the International speaking, Mr. Morris. You are coming to Chicago with me on a special train. I'll be round at your hotel in half-an-hour. Hold on there. You certainly *must* come. If your device is what you claim it to be there's a big contract waiting for you. Jump into your clothes and don't keep me waiting."

"Well, I'm darned! yawned Morris, "if that man is not a cyclone, ask me." But the Price representative knew that he could not afford to ignore Graham's request. The lesser lights of railroaddom would simply have to wait—consider him a fool for a few days, if need be. So he jumped into his clothes as ordered and, going down to the office of the hotel, awaited the imperious Chief of the International Limited. We'll leave both men hurrying to reach the special, which was

already made up and waiting at the Grand Central, and take a cursory view of the wrecked train, lying a helpless mass of steel and wood, and mangled humanity, on the track several miles east of Belleville, a quiet hamlet in the best farming district of Western Nebraska. It is not our purpose to paint a lurid word picture of the awful and agonizing details. Newspapers chroniclers described the accident with all the swing and horrible exactness which has made the American Press notorious, if not famous, all over the world.

The wrecked train left Denver on the evening of the — August, —, at the usual time, 6.30. Everyone knows that the International Overland Limited is protected by Block Signals from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Mr. Graham, always on the look-out for improvements, had been the first big man to adopt the absolute Block System and instal it practically on every mile of his road. But, the effectiveness of the Block Signal System depended entirely on the infallibility of humanity, as the wreck at Belleville plainly shows. It is effective just as long as its operators make no mistakes—just as long as dispatchers and train crews are alert and free from even the suspicion of error. As soon as error creeps in, and it invariably does where frail human nature is concerned, the absolute Block Signal System cannot be logically considered as a safety appliance worthy of the consideration of the big transportation companies. Let us admit, in all fairness, that the Block Signal System has saved many lives. A train cannot enter a black on a road on which this system is applied if there is a train directly ahead, provided that the operators signal perfectly and that the crew of the oncoming train read that signal correctly. The Price device is different. We venture to assert that the Brotherhood of Engineers, railroad men themselves, will no sooner appreciate the merits of The Price Automatic

Signal Device than they will clamor for its adoption. Because it *can not* make mistakes.

The wreck of The International Flyer is proof positive that the Block System does not always assure absolute safety. The freight had moved away from Belleville station, with the right-of-way, to Osborne siding. At Osborne siding it was to be sidetracked to allow The Flyer to pass. The operator of the Block System allowed The Flyer to proceed, signalled clear tracks, when, as yet, the freight was lumbering slowly along three miles west of Osborne. The freight might have possibly reached the siding in time to clear the way for the International Express, but the express was late and the engineer had let her out to a seventy-mile-an-hour clip after clearing Belleville. But, what might have been and what occurred was entirely different. A broken axle had derailed the engine of the freight and before her paralyzed crew realized their predicament, the great headlight of The Flyer loomed through the rainy, inky night, not more than one hundred yards away. Scarcely had the roar of the on-rushing monster reached the dazed senses of the freight's crew, when the engine of The Flyer burst resistlessly through several cars in their rear, to be finally thrown a quivering, hissing heap down the ten-foot embankment. The first two passenger cars on The Flyer were crunched to matchwood by the fearful impact of the heavy Pullmans, and it was only by the sheerest caprice of fate that a single soul in either coach escaped instant and utter destruction. The front of the first Pullman was smashed, killing six occupants and maiming a dozen more, in that car alone. The second Pullman was promptly overturned and as promptly caught fire. How any escaped with their lives in this car borders on the miraculous, for, according to eyewitnesses of the disaster, not more than three minutes elapsed between

the collision and the second that the fire broke out. That any escaped at all is entirely due to the resourcefulness and quick action of a few heroes who were on board the ill-fated train.

Miss Graham's heavy, all steel car, the *America*, was derailed and, although it had maintained its balance, the President's daughter was flung with terrific force from her bed. She escaped with a few bruises; but her young friends were not so fortunate. Miss Hertz received injuries which it is feared will prove fatal at any time, while Miss Collins suffered a broken arm and collar-bone. Luckily Miss Graham's attendants escaped all injuries, and, although badly shaken up, were prompt to obey the brave girl, who immediately set about succoring her friends. The indomitable spirit, which had made the father famous, stood the daughter in good stead. Although stiff and sore, the heroic young woman had no sooner placed her friends in the care of her attendants than she left the car to ascertain the extent of the damage. The conductor of the *America* tried to keep her inside; indeed, he blocked the passage and said with a good deal of determination: "Pardon me, Miss Graham, but you positively must stay where you are. Out on the track is no place for a woman."

But Graham's daughter's eyes flashed fire. "Sir, do you dare to order me! Kindly accompany me ahead in order that we may get some idea of the damage."

The man obeyed; but the debris accomplished what he had tried to accomplish and failed. The track had been torn up, a few of the heavy steel rails being twisted like wires. Beyond the burning car it was impossible to proceed, and now that the groans of the mangled and dying cut the otherwise dreadful stillness of the night, the President's daughter covered her ears and cried out in hysterical agony.

The conductor, an old and faithful servant of Gordon

Graham's, caught up the young woman as if she had been a child, and, despite her imperious commands, carried her to where the America was twisted across the tracks and gently forced her into the car.

Uncovering his head, with the courtesy of a courtier in the presence of a queen, he firmly declared: "Miss Graham! I've grown old in your father's employ. I've merely done what he would desire me to do were he with us at this hour. Believe me, strong men are doing all that can be done, and the 'auxiliary' will be here shortly. I'll bring you news of what is going on, on the condition that you promise not to leave this car during my absence."

Miss Graham looked down on the fine old man, silhouetted between her and the blazing car ahead. He was no longer an employee, but a skilled general, about to survey the scene of disaster, and she reluctantly promised.

The public already knows the particulars of that fateful night, as black as any in the annals of railroad wrecks. The public also knows that the true cause of the disaster has not been revealed. The operator of the Block System declares that the signal was set dead against the express. The crew of The Flyer's engine were hurled into eternity without a moment's warning. Their story will never be told. We only know that any signal system, however modern it may be, is no guarantee of safety, when it has to depend on poor, frail humanity for its correct application. A self-adjusting, automatic device—a device which precludes all and every possibility of disaster on any railway, from any cause whatever, is the only guarantee of absolute safety the travelling public can ever hope to have.



"The great man sat gazing out of the window at the flying landscape, entirely absorbed in his own gloomy thoughts."—Page 35.

Chapter Five



ON the morning after the wreck on the International, and just as the sun had begun to disperse the mists which hung lazily over the valley of the Hudson, a powerful engine with a private car attached shot off Manhattan Island and along the track which skirts the northern shore of the river. Two skilled engineers were in the cab with instructions to land the President in Buffalo in record time. "Clear the road for the Chief's Special." That terse command preceded Graham's train, and was literally obeyed. It mattered not how traffic was stalled or disorganized the Chief's commands must be obeyed. And well obeyed they were. Before the sun had reached the meridian, the President with a fresh crew had left Buffalo a hundred miles behind. Already special newspapers were being sold on the streets of our great cities giving full details of the wreck of the International Flyer and picturing President Graham's mad dash across the continent to the side of his injured daughter and the scene of the dreadful disaster. The sensational press had pumped the gruesome expectations of the morbid to the highest pitch, long before the great man had covered the first lap of his now famous ride. The people of the United States were interested, deeply interested in Graham's movements. He was their Colossus—the chiefest of all their imperial figures, and well the yellow press knew and interpreted the fact. Uncle Sam's children make it their business to curse the trusts, loud and deep and long; but your true American is always a hero-worshipper. Graham's strong character and the

wonderful achievements he had crowded into a life-time appealed forcibly to an intelligent nation, and the eyes of the most imaginative people on the globe were focussed on the madly rushing special that devoured the miles at an average speed of seventy-five an hour. Indeed, had not Graham been handed the following urgent message at Buffalo from his daughter: "For God's sake slow down. I'm all right," it is more than probable that the President of the International would have broken all previous records between New York and Chicago by two hours instead of one. But fortunately for his peace of mind communication had been established between himself and his daughter at an early stage in his journey, so that he was able to contemplate the distance and hours which still separated him from the only one who knew him well with a degree of equanimity which would have been otherwise impossible.

As we have said, the whole country had been aroused by the appalling accident on the people's favorite road, for the citizens of the Republic were not only proud of Graham, they were also proud of the great organization and transport company that went under the name of The International Overland, Limited. It was their road, the mightiest and most modern railway on earth. And as the hours ticked by men stood before the bulletin boards of the newspapers in the great cities breathlessly awaiting news of Graham's Special. "He'll smash all records to smithereens," was a common expression, and the hardier element of these fascinated crowds were actually betting on the hour of the International's Chief's arrival in Chicago.

The Chicago *American* had something extra special to announce in its one o'clock edition. It was one of the yellow journals owned and controlled by that

strangest of all strange geniuses, the fighting William Randolph Hearst. The one o'clock edition of this paper announced in flaring head-lines:

“THE CHIEF OF THE INTERNATIONAL
DETERMINES TO MAKE

RAILROAD WRECKS IMPOSSIBLE.

A REPRESENTATIVE OF PRICE'S AUTOMATIC
DEVICE ON BOARD THE SPECIAL.”

Then followed a column or two devoted to the last and most wonderful achievement of science, telling in the picturesque and breezy style of the *American* newspaper man all that this simple and scientific device meant to the travelling public. The *American's* reporter certainly had made a scoop worth while, if one might judge by the rapidity with which the newspaper boys got rid of their bundles.

What was actually happening on the flying Special as it ate up the leagues in its mad western rush? Mr. Morris had been forced to content himself during the morning hours with the company of Mellin, Graham's Secretary. The great man sat gazing out of the window at the flying landscape, entirely absorbed in his own gloomy thoughts. But, as the miles were rattled off in blocks of a hundred or more, and as the cheering message was handed to the Chief at every stop, his gloom was gradually eclipsed by his inherent and indomitable cheerfulness, so much so that in the early afternoon the President summoned Mr. Morris to his private stateroom. The Price man was agreeably surprised with Graham's cheerfulness, real or assumed, and very soon they were discussing and analyzing the wonderful device as only expert railroad men could. Mr. Morris was prepared for a calm, judicial analysis of the marvellous invention; he knew his subject thor-

oughly, and he was one of those rare beings gifted with extraordinary imagination and a deep insight into human nature. The young man was as calm and clear a reasoner as the Chief of the International himself. With admirable coolness and inimitable logic he related the merits of the Price Signal Device. He pictured two trains rushing together, head-on, on the same track, at the rate of sixty miles an hour, and only one mile apart.

"Mr. Graham," he said, to use his own forceful and eloquent language, "I tell you that a collision between those two trains would not happen if the track were equipped with this device—a collision could not possibly happen even suppose the crews of both trains were all insane or dead. Electrical "feelers" would signal both trains, automatically set the brakes and keep them set long enough to slow down both trains, or stop them altogether, if adjustments were made for that purpose."

"These are certainly startling assertions, my young friend," replied Graham. "But I know you believe every word you say. Would you be good enough to describe the Price Device in detail, and explain its method of operation?"

"Gladly, sir! The track of a road equipped with the Price Signal System is divided by insulated rail joints into sections or blocks, about three-quarters of a mile long, more or less, as circumstances may require. At one end of each block a "track battery" is located in a chute in the ground, as shown in this illustration, below the frost line, and is connected to the rails. At the other end of the block a "track relay" is mounted in a box near the track, and is also connected to the rails. Normally the battery sends currents along one rail to the coils of the relay, which current returns along the other rail to the battery.

"Now, sir, if a train be passing over any part of a block, the heavy axles provide a short-circuit across the track battery, which prevents the current from passing through and magnetizing the relay, and it is compelled to drop its armature. Thus the presence of a train on any part of any block is always accompanied by the dropping of the corresponding track relay armature. This action results in electrical feelers, so to speak, being always thrown out before and behind all trains over the necessary precautionary distance as they travel along.

"If, therefore, two trains should run near enough together so that their precautionary districts overlap, the "feelers" touch each other, the trains are signalled electrically, as I have said, and are instantly protected by the automatic setting of the air brakes, which are then held set long enough to bring the train to caution speed, or stop it altogether, as may be desired.

"The engineer is not asked to correctly interpret a signal as he flashes past, as was the case with the engineer of the wrecked Flyer. His brakes are electrically and automatically applied, and that's the first intimation he has of the proximity of danger. His train would be automatically slowed down to caution speed by the Price Device.

"Mr. Graham, the whole affair may be described in a nutshell, without dragging in any more technical details. Any signal system, old or new, depending on human operators for its exact and accurate application, must always be a prolific source of trouble and disaster. That much you will gladly and freely admit. The Price Device is altogether different. It removes all uncertainty. It positively cannot fail. When a train is in danger it promptly applies the brakes. When two trains approach head-on both are stopped. When one train is following another too closely, the

second is checked while the first proceeds. No train can run on to a broken rail or a fallen bridge. This Device holds it back from danger. Mr. Graham, it is your plain duty as the foremost railroad man of our age to prove my words. Accept no statement of mine. Accept no statement made in our literature. Let us equip a part of your trunk line, or any of its branches, with the great invisible ruling hand of this truly marvellous Device, and if it does not prove far more effective in actual operation than any tongue can tell, have nothing to do with it. We'll pay all expenses. You and your engineers can appoint and supervise the test."

The President of the International gazed out of the window at the panoramic view of peaceful country as it flashed past. For a few moments nothing was heard but the ceaseless throb of the mighty engine and whishing noise of the swiftly moving car. Then Graham held out his strong hand and gripped that of the young man cordially. For a second the full grey eyes looked straight into Morris's face as if the magnate would read his very soul. And at last he spoke slowly, deliberately, carefully: "Mr. Morris, I believe what you say of this wonderful device is true. It has been tested on the Intercolonial. I won't promise to instal it all over the International at your request, but I will test it thoroughly, and if it comes up to my expectations, the Price Device will be installed on every mile of track I have anything to do with."

"Thank you, sir. I'll wire my people to get busy. The Device will win your entire approval."

So saying the delighted Morris left the great man to the privacy of his own thoughts.

Gordon Graham's thoughts were entirely favorable as far as a thorough and exhaustive test of The Price

Automatic Signal Device was concerned. But, for a few moments, he thought more about the square-jawed young man and his logical stating of his case than anything else. "Morris can have fifteen thousand a year if he cares to enter my services, and by Old Glory I'll find out." So muttered Graham in the privacy of his stateroom. Then his thoughts reverted to the awful disaster and he mourned, as all true men should, over the untimely end of so many of his fellow-citizens. The fortunate escape of his beloved daughter cheered his soul in this his darkest hour, and he solemnly and reverently vowed to find out all that could be found out about this latest achievement of science—to test it fairly and squarely, and to equip his entire system with it if it proved to be such a wonder-worker as the enthusiastic Mr. Morris believed it to be.

But of all strange things on this earth of ours the working of the human brain is the strangest and most erratic. Here was Gordon Graham hurrying to the scene of one of the most frightful disasters in the whole black history of railroad wrecks—this appalling catastrophe had happened on his own road—his daughter's escape was miraculous; all these points are known and have been considered by our readers. Graham was as shrewd a business man as any on the continent, more than that he was big-hearted and humane, even if he were an imperious multi-millionaire. The Chief of the International was almost persuaded that The Price Device was even more effective as a life-saver than any words of man could reveal, and yet, *and yet* the cost of installing this marvellous apparatus all over his immense system staggered him for the time, and caused him uneasy thought. It is nearly unbelievable to say so, but, alas, for poor human nature, it is too true!

We're living in a business age, the god of commerce

rules our world, and we do not imagine for a moment of time that a man of affairs should believe all that is claimed for every new invention. But this subject is pregnant with such significance, it means so much from the purely moral and humanitarian standpoint, the Device is heralded by the foremost scientists of our age as a saviour of human lives, and the cost should not figure in our estimate of its value for a single second. If this invisible and automatic guardian of human beings from awful and unthinkable deaths is mechanically and scientifically perfect, and skilled engineers and scientists declare that it is so, then legislators should draw up laws instructing and enforcing every corporation possessing a railroad charter to instal the Price Device after a reasonable lapse of time; and where such corporations did not conform to the law, the duty of governments is plain and inevitable. Charters should be revoked. The cost of equipping a road with this Device should not be considered at all. In this case the cost is reasonably moderate, and the people should clamor for its adoption. We cannot close this chapter without glancing at Mr. Graham's position, and weighing his thoughts impartially. The Chief of the International was a multi-millionaire; but the wealth attributed to him by the average citizen and newspaper was absurd. If all Graham's holdings were turned into currency to-day, it is doubtful if his personal fortune would exceed fifteen or twenty millions. Like the majority of well-known and rich men his private fortune is grossly exaggerated by the press and the public.

The earnings of the International had declined month after month for nearly a year. The actual deficit about the date of the wreck was well up in the millions. The surplus had been practically wiped out by the President's deals earlier in the year, and

the new roads had demanded immediate overhauling. Nor had they had time to make any showing. So that Graham required money badly when the Price Device was first brought to his notice. He admitted its perfections, he was willing to subject the Device to searching and exhaustive test, but to apply it all over the International, when it proved its absolute accuracy and reliability, would cost a considerable sum of ready money even in the eyes of a big corporation with practically unlimited credit. Another element entered into the big man's calculations and swayed his decision. The veriest shade of non-success hurt the soul of this wonderfully successful man, and he knew that if he equipped his entire road with this new system, he certainly would augment his deficit by a million or more at the lowest possible estimate. The world-old struggle between the might of money and the inestimable value of human lives raged fiercely within the mind and soul of Gordon Graham, and to the everlasting shame of our race we must register the fact that, for a time at least, this big man resolved to save the money. The lives of men and women were cheap. Success, not gold, was the god the President of the International worshipped. And for the time Graham was a devout and ardent devotee of his deity. Let us be thankful that The Price Automatic Device for the Stopping and Controlling of Trains—as great a boon as any that science has ever conferred on humanity—was to be tested under the eyes of a crystal-souled young woman who had skirted the valley of the shadow of death and beheld a score or more of her fellow-creatures launched into eternity without a moment's warning.



"God has given you back your 'Little Girl' out of that horrible catastrophe.
Draw up and sign the statement for my sake."—Page 53

Chapter Six



THE story of the railroad magnate's record-breaking dash from New York City to the quiet Nebraskan town is well known and has been commented on and written about wherever and whenever newspaper men and magazine writers congregate. Had one of the battle-ships under Admiral Evans come to grief it would not have startled the people of the Republic more than the appalling disaster on the International. Graham's system was recognized and widely advertised as "The Safe Road," and not without a good deal of reason. The International had had its minor wrecks; but never until that fateful August night had it been made notorious by any really serious disaster. The iron discipline inaugurated and maintained by the great railroad man, his usual eagerness to instal any device which made for the safe operation of his system, the extreme caution exercised by all minor officials, had created a public belief in the International as "The Safe Road" that bordered on the marvellous. And when the newspapers reported the wreck of The Flyer a majority of their readers could hardly believe their own eyes. A wreck on the International—Graham's road? Why the thing was impossible, the newspapers were wrong. That fearful accident must have happened on another road. So the people argued. But as detailed accounts of the wreck appeared in one extra edition after another of the newspapers of our big cities, the people's faith in "The Safe Road" gradually diminished and finally vanished altogether.

The people of the United States are the most emo-

tional—if not the most hysterical—on earth. Other railroad magnates they had cursed before; but somehow Graham always escaped their maledictions. Now all was changed in one short day. Gordon Graham was guilty of manslaughter. The great and unthinking tribunal of the people had tried him and he was found wanting. No lesser official must serve as a scapegoat. The President of the road was the guilty party, and he must be officially decapitated at once.

In great crises public opinion is but little superior to mob rule. Cool, clear intellects are required to adjust matters. No sooner had the scoop of the *Chicago American* become public property—no sooner did the people read that Graham had vowed to make railroad wrecks impossible, and that he and the representative of the Price Device were dashing across the continent to the scene of the catastrophe, than public opinion veered around distinctly favorable to its idol. This hour men declared that Graham should be lynched. The next hour the President of the International was the only railroad magnate who considered the safety of his passengers for a moment. Public opinion would have sanctioned his death at 2 p.m. on that sultry August day; at 6 p.m. Graham was its hero and its king. The newspapers of the United States are the mightiest power in all the world. The Republic may survive with a lot of fool senators in her halls of political debate and even a weak President; but woe betide that country when all her newspapers are controlled by as reckless and illogical men—men incapable of appreciating the grave responsibilities of their position—as some who are notorious to-day.

Bursts of hysterical anger and praise were thrown to the public alternately regarding the International wreck and its able President, Graham was reviled in one edition of the yellow press and praised unstintedly

in the next. The man did not merit either praise or blame. Granted that his road was the greatest and the safest on the continent, Gordon Graham had merely performed his duty as he saw it. Fortuitous circumstances had combined with great industry and wonderful ability in flinging Graham into his position of unquestioned pre-eminence in the railroad world. He was the scion of a race of fighters—men who harnessed opportunity and made her an obedient slave. And while he did not actually merit a single reproach for the accident on his road, neither did he merit any great praise for his success. When a man performs his duty in any sphere of life, according to the fullest extent of his ability, be it ever so humble, he has done all the gods require—even they can do no more.

If Mr. Graham is to be reproached at all it will be on the head of his dilatoriness regarding the testing of the Price Device. Mr. Morris's first visit had convinced him of its worthiness. He believed in its merits. It had been tested under the eyes of able engineers and railroad men. The scientific world had recognized the Device as one of its perfect productions. Evidences of all these facts were laid before the President of the International, evidences which he could have verified in a single hour of time. But the Chief did not prove the young man's words—the claims made for the wonderful invention. Graham's unusual slowness may be even then accounted for. Men in his position are constantly besieged by the plausible stories of cranks, self-styled inventors. Moreover his resources and the resources of his road were tied up—his surplus was exhausted—he had no ready cash on hand. We can account for Mr. Graham's hesitancy, although we cannot produce one good reason for his seeming neglect.

However, there is one thing for which we cannot so

readily forgive this far-sighted man of the world. After the Price Device had more than proved all the claims made for it on one of the branch lines of the International System, Graham actually informed Mr. Morris that although he was satisfied in every way with the exhaustive tests made under his own eyes and the eyes of his friend James J. Hill, the President of the Great Northern besides a score or more of lesser railroad officials, he could not possibly equip his road with the Device for another year at least. But we're getting ahead of our story.

Fancy yourself on a bright September afternoon in one of the western prairie states of America. Since the dawn of day you have been journeying towards the setting sun. On either side of the track the golden grain waves in the light breeze. Here and there the reapers have been at work and you have noticed the sidings, as you have journeyed westward, already filled with grain-laden cars. At 3 p.m. you leave the International trunk line and after a two hours' journey due north you drop off at a wayside station to be whirled exactly three miles out into the open country. Near a farm-house you leave the dusty road and your chauffeur drives the car straight into a harvest field, a portion of which has been cleared of grain. Others have arrived before you. There are no less than a dozen big touring cars all drawn up and facing the single track which gleams in the afternoon sun not more than two hundred yards away. At least two of America's great railroad magnates are there. They converse earnestly together, and every now and again the hand of one or the other sweeps around in the direction of the track significantly. The magnates are none other than Gordon Graham of the International, and James J. Hill of the Great Northern. At least two score of lesser officials, railroad men and engineers, are

grouped behind the magnates and a flutter of ribbons and filmy veils announce the presence of several gaily dressed young women. Even the whirl of the reapers are stilled for the time and the busy harvesters stand at a respectful distance gazing expectantly on the track shimmering in the sun. A glance along the line reveals several white boxes raised on posts by the side of the track; but before you have time to ask your chauffeur what all this strange scene means, the murmuring voices are hushed, and a powerful engine bursts from the forest to the right with a roar. Scarcely have you noticed the flying engine and the swaying cars when a train leaps into sight from the left, and as they whirl together head-on, you wonder what diabolical brain has engineered this fatality for the amusement of this little throng of men and women. On and on, nearer and nearer the hissing, steam-spouting iron monsters rush, and as you prepared your dumbed senses for the mighty crash, the rushing trains slow down perceptibly, and with a grinding shriek of disappointment, come to a dead stop. No collision is going to happen. No catastrophe can occur because this piece of track is equipped with the Price Automatic Device for the *Controlling* and *Stopping* of Trains. Day after day, for almost a week the apparatus had been tested in every manner known to these railroad experts, and always with the same result—a triumphant vindication of all claims made for it. This invisible, all-powerful device divined the presence of disaster; just as soon as the two uncontrolled monsters entered the danger zone it applied the brakes and held them set until both trains were brought to a dead stop. Again and again the Price Device had demonstrated its marvellous superiority to any other signal system extant. It was infallible, as accurate and reliable as natural law. All other signal systems, however perfect they might be in

theory, were bound to be the source of frequent trouble and disaster, because their efficient operation demands a degree of infallibility which poor mortals do not possess. They could never be more perfect in actual operation than the human agency which controlled them. The Price Device, an apparatus modelled in accordance with natural law, on the other hand, eliminated all possibility of railroad disasters.

On this September afternoon, and while as yet the hissing of escaping steam alone broke the stillness, Miss Graham glided to the side of the Price representative, whose eyes were still riveted on the stopped trains. The impulsive young woman took his strong hand in her small gloved ones and said: "Mr. Morris! I do not know what to say; I cannot express my thoughts, but, the Price Device is truly wonderful. Providence is very good to us in giving us such tireless investigators."

Morris noticed that the girl's eyes were suffused with tears. He simply replied: "I thank you, Miss Graham, for myself and as the representative of the Price Device."

Every newspaper reader on the continent had been thrilled with the description of the marvellous tests and the infallibility of the Price Automatic Signal apparatus in actual operation. The hopes of the travelling public had been realized at last. Undoubtedly legislatures would be compelled to pass laws in favor of its universal adoption. But, until that happened many railroad magnates would view the cost first and the saving of human lives after that.

Gordon Graham was seated in his luxurious private car, hurrying to headquarters in New York, the day following the final test of the Price Device we have just described. His daughter and her friends with Mr. Morris were also aboard the special car, but the

President of the International kept in the seclusion of his own stateroom. The big man was turning over telegram after telegram, and dictating replies to his Private Secretary to be sent ahead at the next stop. For more than an hour Graham was as busy with affairs as if he sat at his great desk in his office on Broadway. When at last he had attended to the more urgent matters that claimed his attention he asked his Secretary to send in Mr. Morris. The Price representative gladly obeyed the mandate of the big man, for he was convinced that Graham had decided to instal his company's device on every mile of the International, but Morris was doomed to bitter disappointment. No sooner had he taken the chair the Chief of the International courteously waved him to, than Graham said: "Mr. Morris, the Price Automatic Device has more than proved your words correct. It is wonderful—as you say infallible in operation, but," and the great man spoke with startling distinctness, "I cannot hold out any hopes of an immediate and extensive application of the Device on my road. You might try I-ll; but it is hardly likely you would succeed with him when you have failed with me."

The cold, deliberate sentences which obliterated the young man's hopes and practically countermanded the hurry-up orders he had forwarded to the head office of the Universal Signal Company, Limited, staggered even the resourceful and tactful Morris; but only for a moment. The President's words were discouraging; but Price's man was a diplomat only less experienced than the Chief of the International himself. He smiled gravely, for he was bitterly disappointed, and said:

"Mr. Graham, what mode of reasoning has led up to your decision I cannot say. I have told you all about the Price Automatic Signal Device that I know. I have had our company go to considerable expense

for the exhaustive tests of last week; which, you admit, have clearly demonstrated the accuracy of all our claims. Now, sir, I have nothing more, not one word, to say about our Device; but, if you will permit me, I have something to say about your business which is of paramount importance to you and the shareholders of the International. If you kindly call your daughter I would like to make my statement regarding your business in her presence."

It was President Graham's turn to be staggered. For a moment or two he thought of dismissing the daring young man, but a glance at Morris's grave face and intelligent eyes convinced him that Price's representative had good reasons for his strange and unusual request. And at last the Chief of the International pressed a button and ordered the servant who answered the call to request Miss Graham's presence.

The young woman entered the private stateroom at once and taking the chair which Morris proffered with grave deference, gazed in sheer amazement at both men. Morris was quick to note her wonderment and plunged apologetically into his subject: "Miss Graham! You will pardon my boldness in requesting your father to call you, and I am sure, sir, you will do the same when you hear what I have to say. Your father has almost decided against an extensive application of the Price Automatic Device on the International at present. Now, sir, with your permission, we will turn to your personal affairs. For the first time in a decade or more the International will pay no dividends for the year. The two feeders you bought early in the spring practically wiped out your surplus, and, Mr. Graham, if you stick to your business principles it will be some time before the International does pay dividends. Business has fallen off by a considerable margin on all big railroads during the last year. The

people have as much money per capita as ever before in the history of the continent; but they are not spending it in railroad fares. Now, Mr. Graham, just when you are planning to change your considerable deficit into a fair surplus, the wreck occurs and practically destroys a life-time's work in building up public faith in the International as 'The Safe Road.' Any other railroad man, of note, in the United States would have kept his surplus intact by issuing sufficient stock to buy the feeders I have already referred to. Your policy has been to make millionaires out of your shareholders, for the history of the International plainly shows that the surplus earnings of the road have bought up nearly every branch line you have. I knew the history of your road, as a great dividend-paying business, before I sought an interview with you regarding our device at all. Our business is to learn all we can about just such systems as the International. Well, the wreck of The Flyer staggered public faith in the International as 'The Safe Road.' On our way out to the scene of disaster, knowing what the Price Automatic Device could do, and believing that you had practically determined to adopt it, I resolved to do all I could to restore public confidence in your road. I wired the fact ahead to the *Chicago American* that you intended to make railroad wrecks impossible by installing the Price Device all over your great system, and that I was aboard your Special. Since then I have caused the newspapers to print column after column of live news regarding your road; every big newspaper had an able correspondent on the ground back there in Nebraska, while the testing of the apparatus went on for a week under the supervision of Mr. I-ll and yourself, and, sir, permit me to say that the people of the United States have more faith in the International at this moment as 'The Safe Road' than ever before in its history. What will the

people say when they learn that President Graham of the International Overland Limited has no intention—no immediate intention of equipping his road with the only absolutely safe signal device that has been evolved? What, I ask you as a business man, will be the attitude of the great newspapers from the Atlantic to the Pacific?"

The young man paused for a moment as if to allow the Chief of the International time to reply. But Graham remained silent and his daughter turned expectant eyes first on one man and then another. Finally Morris continued with the irresistible logic of the practiced salesman: "Mr. Graham, I want to tell you fairly and squarely that it would be the poorest policy you could possibly adopt to adhere to your present resolve. You simply cannot afford to postpone the instalment of the Price Automatic Device all over your road. Sooner or later you will be forced to equip the International—every mile of your system—with this device. By doing so now, you secure absolutely free of charge millions of dollars' worth of advertising in the best newspapers and periodicals in the country. A signed statement by you to the effect that you have started to instal this device from ocean to ocean will boost International stock as nothing else could—it will augment your passenger traffic very considerably—it will restore the faith of the people in 'The Safe Road,' and make the name a positive fact, besides transforming your present deficit into a substantial surplus. In brief, sir, it will pay you well to give that signed statement to the newspaper men at our first stop."

Whatever effect the ardent words of the Price representative had on Gordon Graham, who maintained his imperturbable calm, there is no doubt about the effect of the young man's arguments on the daughter. Falling on her knees by her father, and twining his

arm fondly about her neck, she said: "Father! I am positive that Mr. Morris is correct. He has given what I believe to be excellent business reasons why you should act as he says. God has given you back your 'Little Girl' out of that horrible catastrophe. Draw up and sign the statement for my sake."

The tactful Morris quietly slipped from the private stateroom. Graham's famous statement thrilled the travelling public as nothing else could have done. The wreck of the International Flyer was completely obliterated in the national mind. A few sad eyes wistfully gazed across the undulating prairie of the far western state and mourned for those who would never return; but even they were cheered by President Graham's statement:

"Having subjected the Price Automatic Device for the Controlling and Stopping of Trains to severe and exhaustive tests, I agree with our expert engineers and men of note in the world of science in believing that it will make railroad wrecks absolutely impossible. I have therefore contracted with The Universal Signal Company, Limited, to equip every mile of the International System with this apparatus."

"(Signed) GORDON GRAHAM."

The predictions of the Price representative regarding the affairs of the International are being proved correct. International stock is still soaring. Graham is once more the idol of the people, and his railway is in fact, as well as in name, "The Safe Road."

